The

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Notes of the Month.

We greatly regret the printer's error of last month, when the magazine was dated December, 1912. Those of our readers who keep the magazine for purposes of binding will most feel the effects of the blunder, and all we can do is to request that they will kindly rectify with the pen and trust with us that the like may not happen again.

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During this year Unitarians throughout the United Kingdom will be celebrating an important event in the history of a long-fought struggle for Religious Liberty. **The Christian Life** proposes to mark the occasion by issuing a much enlarged and profusely illustrated Special Number on Saturday, 10th May. It will contain valuable contributions by some of our foremost men and women dealing with the history of the Unitarian movement in the United Kingdom, and telling in word and picture something of the struggles and victories and progress of the denomination since the passing of the historic Act of 1813. This number will undoubtedly be highly interesting to all Unitarians, and it will afford them a fine opportunity for a special piece of missionary work, viz., to circulate it among friends who do not quite understand our position and outlook. The price of the Number will be twopence, but special rates are offered for parcels of 50 and upwards.

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Dr. Collyer's last visit to England and to Ilkley was in 1907, when he opened the Ilkley Public Library. This was on Wednesday, October 2nd, and the occasion was marked by the unveiling of bronze busts of himself and Mr. Andrew Carnegie, who provided the Library buildings. Dr. Collyer has made several valuable gifts to the Library, and we believe a unique collection of books on Yorkshire was bequeathed by him some time ago. When last in England he received the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters from Leeds University. The address of introduction by the then Vice-Chancellor contained the following passage:—" In 1850 he emigrated to the United States, where he continued to work as a blacksmith for nine years. Subsequently his worth having been recog-

nised, he was welcomed into the intellectual aristocracy of the nation. He became minister of the Unity Church at Chicago, and afterwards of the Church of the Messiah in New York. He became the personal friend of Emerson, Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Hawthorne, and was the last of that group of men who made literature as brilliant in the United States during the Victorian era as it was in England. Throughout the Civil War he was a member of the Sanitary Commission of the United States, and in that capacity he visited battlefields, hospitals, and attended the wounded. He received for his services the public thanks of the Government and the private benedictions of thousands of sufferers.

Dr. Collyer was the author of a number of works, including "Ilkley, Ancient and Modern," which he wrote in conjunction with Mr. J. H. Turner. As a mark of respect to the memory of Dr. Collyer, the bronze bust in the vestibule of the Ilkley Public Library was draped with black on the news of his death reaching Ilkley, and the flag on the Town Hall was also flown half-mast.

NONSUBSCRIPTION.

By Rev. E. H. Pickering, B.A.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.—2 Cor. iii, 17.

OUR Church is an enigma to the great bulk of professing Christians. They cannot in the least understand our position. The most they usually arrive at is that we are an isloated, negligible, little band of heretical faddists. But for all that, for all our insignificance and their superiority, our Church is based on a principle which is absolutely essential to genuine religious life. The principle of nonsubscription is no mere negation of all belief, but the assertion of a passionate desire for the true belief. So much did our forefathers desire to know and serve God that they refused to be forced to accept, or to force others to accept, any man-made creed. For man is man and not God; his ways are not God's ways, and the most man can do is to approximate to a knowledge of God; and, until man is perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect, our knowledge must be continually progressive. In the wise words of Pastor Robinson to the Pilgrim Fathers, as they set forth in the *Mayflower* nearly three hundred years ago to find a new and freer home, "It is not possible that full perfection of knowledge should break forth at once."

It is in the maintenance of the principle of religious liberty that the existence of our Church is justified. The world cannot do without us. Even if we cannot draw thousands to our fold, yet the presence of a loyal few keeps the other Churches moving on. Without the criticism which the very existence of our Church implies they could not grow, and without growth religion is dead, for religion is the continual operation of the Holy Spirit in the souls of men, expressing itself in, and adapting itself to, all the new forms of life and experience that each successive generation brings forth. Hence, if our numbers never increased, we should still serve a most useful purpose by acting as a stimulant to other Churches, and so find our continued growth in their continual enlightenment. But I do not see why we should not increase in numbers; and if we did, our influence would be so much the greater. Perhaps the chief reason why we remain so few is that we are not sufficiently inspired with the worth of our basic principle to be able to inspire others to join us. At present we are rather concerned with a religious dogma than a religious principle; rather more anxious to teach and learn a certain specific dogma than to exercise our principle of liberty in the pursuit of religious truth. The cause of this is nothing but spiritual indolence. We have got so far that we would like to rest. But there can be no rest for our souls until they rest in the Lord: until, that is, we have found him by the truth and beauty of a godlike life. To this end creeds are of no use, no matter how enlightened they may be. Not even Unitarianism

will suffice, unless by that we mean not a specific creed, but an open-minded, open-hearted way of approach to God.

It is no use being afraid of liberty, nor of complaining that it is altogether too vague for religious nourishment. What we have to do is to keep that liberty from degenerating into licence, on the one hand, or from hardening into dogma on the other. Just as our Church does not stand for one specific creed, so also it does not stand for every and any creed. We neither wish folk to join us because we teach a creed they like, nor do we wish them to come to us because they do not want to believe anything at all. We wish them to come for the sake of religious life. And, because we make life, and not a creed, the basis of our fellowship, we are a true Church of the living Christ.

For did not Jesus tell us that "God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"? and again, that "the spirit bloweth where it listeth"? It comes by revelation, not by discussion. It grows in spiritual communion, not in theological creeds. This does not mean that we are to blind our intelligence, but that we are to keep our hearts and minds always open, to learn all we can and do all we can. For the more we learn and do the nearer shall we be drawn into active communion with the living God. None has ever brought this truth so clearly and convincingly before mankind as Jesus Christ, for he was, above all else, full of God's spirit. That spirit lifted him high above the men of his day, and has made him an inspiration, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, for all mankind. For he broke down all barriers of class and creed, setting before men the ideal of a fuller life in exchange for the narrowing servitude of man-made creeds. "More life, and fuller" was what he brought and taught, inviting each and every human soul to become not the slave, but the child of God. No wonder St. Paul was moved to cry, "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"!

It is because we wish to be a Christian Church that we should hold fast to the principle of liberty. For this principle has arisen, not out of man's desire to believe nothing, but out of his desire to be filled with the spirit of Christ. Hence we proudly call ourselves a Christian Church, because in the spirit of the living Christ we have found, or can find, that freedom which will lift us above the shackles of superstition, selfishness, and fear, and bring us into intimate communion with God, his Father and ours. Filled with his spirit we shall indeed seek to know—for God has endowed us with minds; but, above all, we shall seek to live—for God has called us to the eternity of godlike life. We shall have our opinions, but we shall not let them divide us, for we shall be united in that which would unite all mankind—the fellowship of God's children, of whom the leader and guide is Jesus Christ. We ought indeed to be proud of our freedom, for it makes our Church the one Church that is really true to the spirit of our Founder. Not that we should exult: rather should we humbly pray that God will give us strength to live up to such an ideal. Nor, again, should we place ourselves in antagonism to the beliefs of our brethren in the other Christian Churches. Far from it! For, as the late Dean Stanley said, "Since in our Father's house there are many mansions, I cannot help believing there are also many doors." All the different opinions of men are but so many doors opening into the infinite; and it may be that other Churches are right in their opinions and we are wrong. What is more likely, it may be that new opinions will arise truer than any existing opinions. But our prime glory is that we are free to welcome these opinions if they will bring us to a richer and deeper spiritual life. "God gie us a guid conceit o' oorsells!" *In so far as we are true to our principles*, we are the one true Protestant Church, because we are the only Church that is free; we are the one true Catholic Church, because, though our present place be small, our spirit is elastic enough to embrace the world. Once more, let us humbly pray that God will give us strength to live up to this ideal! Amen.

PIONEERS OF LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY.

By Rev. G. L. Phelps.

1. William Ellery Channing (1780–1842).

IT is not my intention to give a series of biographical sketches of the Pioneers of Liberal Christianity, but to briefly indicate some of their contributions to the development of religious thought. To appreciate Channing fully, we must, however, understand something of the religious atmosphere in which he lived. Puritan New England was, in his day, in bondage to Calvinism of the most rigid and grim order. The well-known story of Channing being taken in his boyhood to hear a famous preacher illustrates this and foreshadows his own attitude. "The sermon was successfully designed to harrow up the feelings with a vivid description of man's fallen state and the awful penalties attaching to his impenitent condition. In the view of the preacher, a curse seemed to rest on the earth and darkness and horror to veil the face of nature ; and the boy entered into this view with ready sympathy, and assumed that all who heard the preacher must be equally impressed. As they started homeward he tried to speak about these dreadful things, but the words stuck in his throat. Moreover, the father's silence made the boy think that he, too, was overwhelmed. But presently the father began to whistle—an inconceivable and startling incongruity. Worse still, on getting home, he said nothing about the sermon, but putting his feet in slippers, sat down before the open fire, the mere sight of which should have been terribly ominous, and settled down to his newspaper as if nothing had happened. Whereupon the boy reflected. Could what he had heard be true ? No, his father did not believe it ; people did not believe it ; it was not true !" Yet later in life Channing wrote : "There was a time when I verged to Calvinism, for ill health and depression gave me a dark view of things. But the doctrine of the Trinity held me back." In spite of this declaration we find that his chief objection to the orthodox system was not the doctrine of the Trinity, but Calvinism which represented human nature as totally depraved.

At first Channing steered clear of controversial subjects in his preaching, thinking more of unity of the spirit than of uniformity of opinion and having a healthy hatred of sectarianism. "Think no man the better, no man the worse, for the Church he belongs to." "An enemy to every religion, if asked to describe a Christian, would, with some show of reason, depict him as an idolator of his own distinguishing opinions, covered with badges of party, shutting his eyes to the virtues and his ears to the arguments of his opponents, arrogating all excellence to his own sect, all saving power to his own creed, sheltering under the name of pious zeal the love of denomination, the conceit of infallibility, and the spirit of intolerance, and trampling on other men's rights under the pretence of saving their souls."

When, however, the rights of reason were endangered and it was unpopular to proclaim the new and larger faith, no fear of being accused of the sectarianism he himself hated kept him back from siding with truth. "If, after a deliberate and impartial use of our best faculties, a professed revelation seems to us plainly to disagree with itself or to clash with great principles that we cannot question, we ought not to hesitate to withhold from it our belief. I am surer that my rational nature is from God than that any book is the expression of his will."

There was nothing of the coward in Channing ; he hated sectarianism, but he loved truth ; he longed for the Church Universal, and did not want any party label, but he thought it better to wear a party label than to leave a false impression on men's minds. "I indeed take cheerfully the name of a Unitarian, because unwearied efforts are used to raise against it a popular cry ; and I have not so learned Christ as to shrink from reproaches cast on what I deem

the truth. Were the name more honoured I should be glad to throw it off, for I fear the shackles which a party connection imposes. I wish to regard myself as belonging to the community of free minds, of lovers of truth, of followers of Christ, both on earth and in heaven. I desire to escape the narrow walls of a particular church, and to live under the open sky in the broad light, looking far and wide, seeing with my own eyes, hearing with my own ears, and following truth meekly but resolutely, however arduous or solitary be the path in which she leads."

Following truth, Channing was led into antagonism to the Calvinism of his day. But his was no religion of denials. He opposed the prevailing religion because it was a hindrance to moral and religious progress. "Calvinism teaches that, in consequence of Adam's sin in eating the forbidden fruit, God brings into life all his posterity with a nature wholly corrupt, so that they are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all that is spiritually good and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually. It teaches that all mankind, having fallen in Adam, are under God's wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life—to death itself and to the pains of hell forever. It teaches that out of this ruined race God, out of His mere good pleasure, has elected a certain number to be saved by Christ—not induced to this choice by any foresight of their faith or good works, but wholly by his free grace and love; and that, having thus pre-destined them to eternal life, he renews and sanctifies them by his almighty and special agency and brings them into a state of grace, from which they cannot fall and perish. It teaches that the rest of mankind he is pleased to pass over and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sins to the honour of his justice and power: in other words, he leaves the rest to the corruption in which they were born, withholds the grace which is necessary to their recovery and condemns them to most grievous torments in soul and body without intermission in hell-fire forever." Against this Channing sets his affirmative faith. "I do and must reverence human nature. I know its history. I shut my eyes to none of its weaknesses and crimes. But the signature of its origin and its end are impressed too deeply to be ever wholly effaced. I bless it for its kind affections, for its strong and tender love. I honour it for its struggles against oppression, for its growth and progress under the weight of so many chains and prejudices, for its achievements in science and art, and still more for its examples of heroic and saintly virtue. They are marks of a divine origin and the pledges of a celestial inheritance. Am I asked for my conception of the dignity of a human being? I should say it consists first in that spiritual principle called sometimes the reason, sometimes the conscience, which, rising above what is local and temporary, discerns immutable truth and everlasting right; . . . and which calls me to rejoice with love in all that is beautiful, good, holy, happy in whatever being these attributes may be found. This principle is a ray of divinity in man. This moral principle—the supreme law in man—is the law of the universe—the very law to which the highest beings are subject, and in obeying which they find their elevation and their joy. Thus man and the highest beings are essentially of one order. They form one family."

This is the significance of the Fatherhood of God for us, "I am not only one of the human race; I am one of the great intellectual family of God." Channing re-discovered the lost doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and taught men to apply it to everyday affairs. Hence his opposition to slavery, his protest against war, his advocacy of temperance, his plea for self-culture, his sympathy with the labouring classes. Some of his theology we may have outgrown, yet in many things to go back to Channing is to go forward.

We are obliged to hold over until next month Sustentation Fund lists from the Ballymoney and the Clough congregations.

THE OLD PRESBYTERIAN MEETING HOUSE, TEMPLEPATRICK.

New Memorial Window.

ON Sunday, 29th December last, a large congregation assembled in the above Church to receive into their custody a new memorial window presented by Mr. William Kell, an esteemed member of the Church. The window is a fine specimen of stained-glass work, and was designed and made by Mr. George G. Laidler, of Newcastle-on-Tyne. The subject portrayed on the circular light at the top is of angels chanting glory to God; on the right light there is a picture of the woman breaking the alabaster box of ointment, and on the left a picture of the poor widow dropping two mites into the treasury. The general subject of the window is that of Gratitude. At the base the following inscription appears:—Erected by William Kell in loving memory of his parents, Joseph and Jane Kell, and of his sister, Ellen Kell, A.D., 1912.

The following extracts are from the sermon preached on the occasion by Rev. A. Turner:—

"*And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious, and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.*" *Mark* 14. 3.

"*And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites which make a farthing.*" *Mark* 12. 42.

These two texts agree on one very important point, viz., that they set forth, in each case, a fine revelation of gratitude, let us say of the finest gratitude, for there may possibly be degrees of quality in gratitude as in other things. At any rate, we have not here the easily spoken word of thanks, the quickly written conventional note, but rather that deep warm feeling of thankfulness to a benefactor with which has been mingled the eternal principle of sacrifice. The box of ointment was *very precious*, representing, we may think, the whole of her possessions; and the poor widow who threw in two mites, threw in, we are told, "even all her living." Not ordinary commonplace thanks these, but thanks coming from the deepest depths of the heart, laden with love and sacrifice.

Such is the finest kind of gratitude, a kind which never fails to make its appeal to those who witness it, a kind which never fails to lift those who are capable of it into the highest realms of spiritual experience. It is good for us to have such ideals constantly before our notice. Let us be sure of this that no matter what may be our lot in life, and our experience of life, we have all of us much to be thankful for, thankful to God and to man, and it is an infinite pity to forget to be thankful, to forget to express our thanks. This beautiful memorial window which we have in our Church for the first time to-day holds aloft for us, and will hold aloft for future generations the high ideal of gratitude, will teach us and those to come after us that a spirit of thankfulness mingled with sacrifice is found always in the best and purest souls.

Of the three departed friends, to whose loving memory the memorial window refers, one of them I did not know; before I came among you he had entered into his rest. But I have often heard him spoken of and always as one who faced life bravely and did his duty, and who was a faithful member of our congregation and supporter of the Church in which we worship. This Church was his Church as it is ours. The other two, mother and daughter, I knew well and intimately, and was privileged to count them among my near friends. It was always a pleasure to meet them, for one reason among others, that they never ceased in their loyalty to their faith and to their Church, and because they were always deeply interested in everything that pertained to its well-being. They thought for it, worked for it, and supported it to the very best of their ability, and they gave to it an allegiance which none of the changing vicissitudes of time could ever shake. The mother, as you will all agree with me, belonged to a generation of fine people, which is

Memorial Window in Old Presbyterian Meeting-House, Templepatrick. Unveiled 29th Dec., 1912.

now, alas! fast passing from our midst. May the day never come when this congregation shall not have such people in its membership. And so I say that it is right and fitting that their memory should be perpetuated in the Church where they worshipped, in the Church which they loved, and for which they wrought.

And now I would speak to you briefly about this beautiful memorial which has been erected in our Church, *i.e.*, about the teaching which it enjoins. As I have already indicated, the subject of the entire window is Gratitude, and that is also its subject in detail. The right-hand large picture tells the story of the alabaster box of ointment.

It is a story of grateful love. Jesus sat at meat in the house of Simon; Lazarus was present; and there came a woman—Mary the sister of Lazarus—full of gratitude for the joy Jesus had poured into her once desolated home and offered the highest tribute of love that came within her reach.

And the ointment was spikenard, *i.e.*, it was pure, genuine nard, for even in those days they knew how to adulterate and how therefore to produce a cheaper nard. But this we are speaking of was, so a commentator tells us, of the best drawn from an Indian plant grown on such mountains as Shalma, Kedar Kanta, and others, at the foot of which flow the Ganges and Jumna Rivers.

What she offered was of the very best, very precious we are told. It was the costliest anointing oil of antiquity, and was sold throughout the Roman Empire, where it fetched a price that put it beyond any but the wealthy. Mary had bought a vase of it, an alabaster box of it, containing, we are told, 12 ounces. Of the costliness of the ointment we may form some idea by remembering that it was among the gifts sent by Cambyses to the Ethiopians, and that Horace promises Virgil about 36 quarts of wine for a small onyx box of spikenard. We are told in the Gospel that it would have sold for more than 300 denarii, about £10.

And coming into his presence she broke the neck of the vase and poured the perfume first on the head of Christ, then on his feet. She offered all, gave all, and her all was worthy of a king. Jeremy Taylor says: "To anoint the feet of the greatest monarch was long unknown; and in all the pomps and greatnesses of the Roman prodigality, it was not used till Otho taught it to Nero."

Such, in brief, is the story of the alabaster box of spikenard. It is a story of devoted gratitude, a story that has gone forth into all lands.

And if we ask why did Mary purchase such a costly spikenard to pour away almost in a moment of time, we raise a question difficult to answer. Out of a heart full of love it came, there can be no doubt, or a heart full of gratitude. The Lord Jesus had stood by her side in time of utter desolation, at a time when life seemed empty, and had revealed to her the sacredness of life, had shown her a larger and a fuller life, perhaps made clear to her the everlastingness of life. For this, clearly, she is profoundly thankful; she draws near, and with reverent hands offers the best outward and visible recognition she can command. And yet who would say it was merely a thankoffering for a personal service rendered? That and nothing more? There might easily have been more in it than that. Truly a master mind, a master spirit was at that time abroad in Bethany, a man of great heart, of unbounded love, empty of self and full of thought for others, who uplifted people and raised them from their dead selves and brought them into touch with the infinite merciful heart of the living God. And this poor woman in her sorrow had met him, had spoken with him, had felt the draw of his magnetic presence. That she thanked him for a service rendered to herself is true, and yet it may well be that that was not the whole of it, that she also had forgotten self, that somehow mysteriously, inexplicably she knew she stood in the presence of earth's greatest and best, whose love was protection, whose hope was assurance, and, feeling this, she counted it all gain to spend and be

spent in her adoration.

The large picture on the left tells the story of the widow's mites. Jesus sat over against the treasury and observed the people as they came putting their money into the collection. The rich people, he could see, cast in much, but what struck him as remarkable was that the poor widow cast in all she had, "even all her living."

Two thoughts occur to us in connection with this story, one of which is supplied to us by the context, and the other, I think, we may safely conjecture. With regard to the first and most apparent, we are told that she cast more into the treasury than the others, because she gave all she had, and they gave of their abundance. Clearly, the teaching is that there can be no charity, no sacrifice, no gratitude when we give out of our superabundance that which we can spare and in no sense miss. What may be a high form of gratitude in one case may mean nothing more than mere conventionality in another. With the rich people the giving was a matter of form; the poor widow denied herself and gave of her substance, and thus in the opinion of our Lord gave more than the rest.

With regard to our conjectured thought, it has always appeared to me that Jesus knew more about this case than he has told us. His words, "she of her want did cast in all that she had," seem to imply that he knew more than he said. What could it have been that he left unsaid? Let us ask why did she give all that she had? Was it not too much to give? Did the circumstances warrant it? It depends of course upon what the circumstances were. The picture in the window assumes that she had young childen.r She had experienced one of the saddest bereavements life can bring. A comparatively new home was hers, with young fresh love and hope in it, and then death comes and takes the beloved husband. It is not easy lacking experience to measure such an affliction, such a calamity, especially where love has existed; one cannot describe the utter desolation of it, the hopeless heartbreak. And yet one likes to think that Jesus had been into that bereaved home, that he had carried thereto his incomparable message, as none but he could carry it, his message of hope, of peace, of consolation; that he had spoken to her of our Father in heaven, that he had unfolded to her his great belief in the life everlasting, and made clear to her that, if the sadness of parting must be endured, the joy of meeting would be equally real. And so there crept into her soul the sweet influence of hope, of peace, of comfort; she made her sacrifice, expressed her gratitude, gave all she had; and the angels, witnessing the act from above, chanted their magnificent hymn Glory to God in the highest.

This teaching we know to be true, for it has the sanction not only of his precept, but of his example. If it be asked, What did he give? it is replied, All he had; his life. He would lead men to better things; he would lift them out of sin into a purer practice of life, he would win salvation for them, he would make possible the life eternal —and to accomplish this he gave himself, and all the Glory he gave to God.

At the conclusion of the service Mr. Kell, in a speech fitting to the occasion, formally presented the window to the minister and congregation, and the minister, Rev. A. Turner, accepted on behalf of himself and the congregation, promising the same reverent care as exercised over other beautiful memorials in their Church.

For the Children.

By Rev. J. Worthington, B.A.

The Lord is my shepherd.—Ps. 23. 1.

WHY does the Psalmist speak of God as a shepherd? The Lord, he says, is my shepherd. Perhaps it will help us to understand if we remember that he was thinking of an Eastern shepherd. There are several things about an Eastern shepherd worth

remembering, but I will ask you to think of only three.

First of all, the shepherd knows all his sheep, and knows them intimately. To us, sheep look pretty much alike, and we can scarcely distinguish one from another. To the trained eye of the shepherd, however, they are different one from another, so much so that he will often give to each a different name. No single sheep is overlooked or forgotten in his care of the flock. You may remember the story Jesus tells of the shepherd who had one hundred sheep, and who one day missed one of them from the fold. One sheep out of a hundred, you might say, was not much to lose. But it was too much for the shepherd. To him it was not merely one sheep, it was this or that particular sheep; it had a name of its own, it had its own peculiarities and virtues. He knew well which sheep was missing, and he went out over the hills in search of it, confident that a diligent searching would lead to its recovery. The shepherd knows all his sheep.

Then, secondly, an Eastern shepherd is sometimes required to risk his life for his sheep. The sheep are exposed to dangers of various kinds. On the treeless plains where they are reared they are exposed to dangers from the weather, the frosts of winter, the droughts of summer. They are in danger also of attack from robbers and wild beasts. When David declared he could slay Goliath if he were allowed to fight him, he urged as a proof of his skill and prowess, you remember, that he had delivered lambs from the mouths of lions and of bears. David had been living the life of a shepherd; he had known that the shepherd must sometimes risk his life for his sheep. The good shepherd who loves his sheep, said Jesus, layeth his life down for his sheep. But the mere hireling when he sees the wild beasts runs away and leaves the sheep to be scattered and devoured.

Then, thirdly, the Eastern shepherd *leads* his sheep and does not *drive* them. He walks in front, not behind. The sheep know the shepherd and follow him; they hear his voice and obey it. It is one of the most interesting of spectacles, we are told, to see a number of flocks of thirsty sheep brought to be watered at a fountain. Each flock lies down awaiting its turn, rises when its turn arrives, is watered in squads of some half-dozen or so; then, when all have been watered, moves leisurely away, all being done in response to some signal or call from its own shepherd. No mistake is ever made. The shepherd calls and leads, the sheep follow and obey.

Now, says the Psalmist, the Lord is my shepherd. Just as the shepherd knows and loves his sheep, so God knows and loves each one of us,—you and me and all men. The individual is not overlooked or forgotten in His care of the human race. Each one of us may say, if he will, the Lord is *my* shepherd. In all our dangers and temptations and difficulties He is able and ready to help us. The thought of God is sometimes sufficient to enable us to meet all difficulties and temptations bravely and fearlessly. How much more bravely could we face them if we remembered that God is our shepherd: if we reminded ourselves that if we accept His leading He will take us to the still waters and the green pastures and the sweet meadows, even though on our way we have to pass along dark valleys and barren plains. Perhaps you have sung Josiah Conder's hymn on the words of our text. You can learn the first verse by heart. It will help you in your life and conduct if you can remember it. Here it is:—

"The Lord my shepherd is,
And He my soul will keep;
He knoweth who are His,
And watcheth o'er His sheep.
Away with every anxious fear,
I cannot want while He is near."

But remember that the sheep know and obey the shepherd. We cannot truly say the Lord is *my* shepherd if we do not obey His voice. Perhaps you have heard of how Theodore Parker, when quite a little boy, was one day looking at a plant, when he saw beneath its leaves a little spotted tortoise. Without a moment's hesitation he

lifted the stick he had in his hand to strike the tortoise to make it move or wake; but while his stick was in the air he felt that what he was about to do was wrong and wicked. And he dropped his stick and went to his mother for an explanation. "That was God's voice speaking to you," said his mother. "Listen to that voice and obey it, and it will speak clearer and clearer, and will lead you in the right way."

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Obituary.

MISS M L. IRVINE, WARRENPOINT.

By the very sudden and much lamented death of Miss Mary Louisa Irvine, the congregation at Warrenpoint has lost its Treasurer, and one of its most valued and most staunch supporters. Miss M. L. Irvine, who passed away on the morning of the 2nd January, in her fifty-first year, was the second daughter of the late Thomas Irvine, of Courtenay Hill, Newry. To "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," she added an undercurrent of faithful zeal, and, in the affairs of the religious community which she loved, she was indeed "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." In health on New Year's Day, called home on the following morn, she passed, without a struggle, to the Nearer Presence. Our deep sympathies are with her surviving sister and her many friends.

The interment, on Saturday, January 4th, was at the family burying-place, Kilkeel, Rev. G. J. Slipper officiating in the house and at the grave.

MR. JAMES DAVIS SMYTH, BANBRIDGE.

With sincere regret we record the demise on the 2nd January, in his seventy-fifth year, of Mr. James D. Smyth, at Milltown House, Lenaderg, Banbridge. It is true that his departure hence was a release from acute suffering, extending over many months, and in this respect death was, as is often the case, an Angel of Mercy; yet the loss of so worthy a member of our religious body cannot be other than an occasion of sorrow.

Mr. J. D. Smyth was a son of the late John Smyth, of Milltown House, a veteran in every good cause, whose memory is still held dear. The baptismal names, given to this son of his, recall to remembrance that stalwart Remonstrant, Rev. James Davis, under whose guidance the congregation of Banbridge was emancipated from bondage to the Westminster Confession.

The welfare of this congregation, in which he held the office of Elder, was always dear to his heart. A man of much business experience, both in the North of Ireland and in America, he enjoyed the affection of many friends and the esteem of all. He leaves a sorrowing widow, two sons (one in America), and two daughters, to whom, along with his brothers, Mr. John Smyth, M.A., of Milltown House, and Dr. Brice Smyth, of Belfast, our sympathies are respectfully tendered.

The funeral took place on Monday, January 6th, and was attended with every mark of respect by ministers and representatives of all Protestant denominations. As the cortège moved from Milltown to the Meeting-house in Banbridge, it was observed that shops were closed, while the bell of the Parish Church was solemnly tolling. Service was conducted in the Meeting-house by Rev. A. Gordon, who also officiated at the graveside in the New Cemetery.

MISS HELEN STERLING BELL, BANBRIDGE.

We regret also to record the death of Miss Helen Sterling Bell which occurred at her father's residence, Ballydown, on January 6th, after a long illness, patiently borne. Miss Bell was the third daughter of Mr. S. Bell, the esteemed Hon. Secretary of the Banbridge Congregation; and, prior to her illness, she acted as Organist, and took an active part in the Sunday School. The funeral took place on Wednesday, January 8th, to the Meeting-House Green, and was largely attended. The Rev. George J. Slipper officiated at the house and at the burial-ground.

On Sunday, January 12th, a service was conducted in the First Presbyterian Church, Banbridge, in memory of these departed friends. The Rev. George J. Slipper, of Newry, occupied the pulpit, and, in the course of his sermon, said—"We meet together under the shadow of a double sorrow, and are here to pay the tribute of respect to the memory of two friends of this congregation who have passed on to the Life Beyond. In the fulness of years Mr. James D. Smyth, a member of a family long associated with the best traditions of this Church, has departed this life; and in the fair bloom of early womanhood Miss Helen Bell has lain down the burden of sickness so patiently borne; and to you who remain the sweet memories of those lives must be the bond that marks the friendship which Death has severed in this world. Mr. Smyth bore an honoured name in the history of this Church, and both as an Elder and member of Committee he made its interests his own. He was a respected friend to every member of the congregation, and one who identified himself with all that pertained to its welfare and progress. He belonged to that school of Unitarians who bravely upheld at all times the principles of our glorious faith; nor would he have dreamed of surrendering those principles for any advantages which might have accrued by departing from them. Unostentatious in the display of those deeply religious principles which are nurtured by our faith, our friend held a sincere reverence for the things that belong to the Eternal, and in a naturally good heart was cultivated a strong faith which, though seldom perhaps expressed in words, was the mainspring of a truly Christian life. But he displayed no bigotry, nay rather, he was ever tolerant and helpful to all the causes that are making manifest the glory of God and the spread of His Kingdom. He has passed on in the fulness of years, respected by all who were privileged to know him, and he rests from his labours and his works do follow him."

Much that I have already said might well apply also as a tribute to the memory of Miss Bell. A fair young life, full of the promise of useful service to your Church, has been closed on earth. She also was a member of a family long associated with this congregation. As the Organist, she devoted her talents to making the praise portion of the Sabbath worship both fitting and inspiring. Her interest in the Sunday School was also very warm, and she worked in the full dawning of her life's brief day, with heart and will, inspired by a deep love to God and as a true follower of Christ. Who shall say that she is dead? Nay, rather, let us think of her as one who has gone to

> "Join the choir invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence."

Thank God, I say, for such lives wherever we meet them. We cherish their memories, even as we realise the significance of their loss to our ranks. They have passed on—one in life's full span, the other in life's fair morning. We sympathise with all our hearts with those to whom the losses are so great and whose sorrows are so deeply intensified, and we pray that God in His Infinite Love will be gracious, and bless and strengthen them to bear their burdens of sadness. At the close of the service Miss Donnan, who presided at the organ, played the Dead March in Saul.

Reports.

Ballycarry.—On the last day of the old year the Annual Sunday School Soiree was held. The tea-tables were ably presided over by the Misses M'Meekin and Service, assisted by the Misses Burns, Nelson, Gray, and Messrs. William Millar and James Magowan. The afternoon was spent in games and dances, and on leaving each scholar was presented with a bag of fruit and cakes. During the evening the adult members and friends of the congregation gathered in large numbers, more than a hundred and fifty persons being present. The following ladies were among the tea-makers:—The Misses M'Meekin, Service, Robinson, Gray, Burns, Nelson, while Messrs. Millar,

Magowan, Ellis, Paisley, and others were the stewards.

* *

Ballyhemlin.—On Wednesday evg., January 22nd, a concert and cinematograph entertainment was held at Ballyhemlin Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Meeting-house. Mr. Alexander R. Hogg was the lanterner, and displayed an excellent series of pictures. Right through the whole proceedings were highly successful. The following were the items of the concert:—"The Snowy-breasted Pearl," Mr. Morrison; "Shamrock of Ireland" and "Old Time's Sake," Miss Katie Anderson; "Annie Laurie," and "When Mother was Twenty-one," Miss Jackson; "Rory O'Moore," Miss Lily Bailie; song, Miss Molly Woods; Mr. Sandy Campbell, Scotch character songs; duet, Miss Teenie M'Master and Miss Aggie M'Meekan, "New Year's Greeting;" trio, "The Wreath," Miss Molly Woods, Miss Bailie, Mr. Morrison; solo, "The Waltz, Waltz, Waltz," Mr. Evans; glees, "Calm is the Sea," "Sweet and Low," the Choir; "The Silver Rhine," by Mr. Morrison. Mr. Sandy Campbell's inimitable personations evoked great applause. Mr. Adam Ennis gave a stump speech. Mr. Sandy Campbell was ably accompanied by a friend. The other accompanists were Mr. Evans and Miss M'Master, whose services were highly efficiently rendered. The proceedings closed with singing "God Save the King."

* *

Banbridge.—The Rev. James Glynne Davies, of Aberdare, has accepted an unanimous invitation to the pastorate of the First Presbyterian Church, Banbridge, and will commence his ministry early in March.

* *

Belfast : All Souls.—The New Year sees the revival of our Sunday School. For some time past it has been suspended, and the scholars were scattered among the neighbouring schools, and in some cases disappeared altogether. But a few of the old ones have been found, and new ones have been enrolled, with the result that, although our numbers are still few, we are more than for several years past. In addition to the junior classes, there is every prospect of a successful minister's class, which should be the centre of social and spiritual enterprise.

* *

Holywood.—The Annual Meeting of the congregation was held after Morning Service on Sunday, January 12th, Rev. G. L. Phelps presiding. The annual report and statement of accounts were adopted, on the motion of Mr. W. H. Niall Nelson, seconded by Mr. Robert Patterson. Miss Greenfield, Messrs. Gawn Grainger, C. J. M'Kisack, and S. M'Crum were elected to fill the vacancies on the Committee. After the usual vote of thanks to the Choir, the recommendation of the General Synod that "The New Hymnal" should be adopted was brought forward, but it was felt that the congregation had not had sufficient opportunity to examine "The New Hymnal," and the matter was postponed to a special meeting to be held in March.

On Tuesday, January 14th, a meeting of the Total Abstinence Society was held, when we were favoured with a visit from the President of the Irish Temperance League, Mr. John Malone, who delivered an earnest address. An excellent programme included songs by Mr. James Shannon, recitations by Mr. Hugh Hunter, violin solo by Miss Violet Murphy, trio by the Misses Murphy and Payne, and part songs by Mrs. M'Crum, Messrs. Harvey and Shannon.

On Thursday, January 16th, the Annual Sunday School Soiree took place. Tea was served to a large number of children, who were afterwards joined by parents and friends. The children themselves provided a very good entertainment, which included action songs, pianoforte duets, recitation, and dances; then Father Christmas appeared and distributed gifts from the Christmas tree. When he had finished his pleasant task there was still time for some games before the singing of "God Save the King." Teachers and scholars wish to express their warm thanks to all who sent gifts or money for the tree, to all who as-

sisted as tea-makers, and to Mr. Hugh Shannon, jun., who did splendidly as Father Christmas. * *

Moneyrea.—On Christmas Eve the Children's Annual Party was held in the old school-room, and in spite of storm and stress proved as popular as ever. Proceedings began shortly after seven o'clock with a pleasant musical programme, in which the following artistes took part :—Miss M. Kennedy, Miss Morrow, Miss K. Yeates, Master Gordon, and Mr. Arbuthnot. Mr. William Yeates, the Church Organist, played the accompaniments. Then came the presenting of a record number of books by the minister to Sunday School scholars for attendance and work done in class. This happy duty was succeeded with baring the Christmas tree (provided by Councillor Bennett) of its load of toys, a task giving universal joy. The adjournment for tea, dispensed by the ladies of the Sunday School Committee, in the Lyttle Memorial School, was a welcome prelude to the dance that was kept going till Christmas Day, and its gracious greeting could happily be exchanged. The singing of "Auld Lang Syne" by the assembled company marked the end of another Christmas party, and its addition to a list of delightful gatherings.

* *

Mountpottinger.—Special services were held in this Church on January 12th, being conducted by Rev. Alexander Gordon, M.A. (ex-Principal of the Home Missionary College, Manchester), who gave two thoughtful and much appreciated addresses. An augmented choir, under the direction of Miss Mary Morrow, L.I.A.M., rendered appropriate music. The collections were for the purpose of reducing the Church debt, and we understand that a welcome total was reached, as fortunately the day kept fine, and in consequence the congregations were of goodly dimensions.

* *

Newry.—A Social Meeting of the members of this Church was held in the School-room, Needham Place, on Friday, January 10th. There was a large attendance of the members. The School-room was nicely decorated with mottoes and flags. Tea and confectionery was heartily partaken of, the ladies presiding at the tea-tables being —Mrs. Warnock, Mrs. Slipper, Mrs. Thompson, Mrs. Robert Rowland, Mrs. Henning, Mrs. Hughes, Mrs. Jack Rowland, and Mrs. Donnell. After tea the Rev. George J. Slipper, the respected pastor, took the chair. He stated that he and the members of the Committee of the Church had called them together that evening to consult with them as to the best means to be adopted to raise a fund to defray the expenses of much-needed repairs to the Church and School-room. A collecting card had been prepared, and he hoped every member would do his or her best to get as much money as would meet the necessary expense to be incurred. It was not often that the congregation had to appeal for support, and he had no doubt but that they would get what they wanted. Several members of the Committee having spoken urging the necessity of the appeal, and hoping it would be successful, collecting cards were distributed, and all promised to do their utmost to assist the object in view. During the evening the following programme was gone through at intervals :—(Miss M'Comb presiding at the piano). Pianoforte duet, "The Romakia," Greek dance (Cyril Carlton), the Misses M. and I. M'Comb ; song, "The Mountains of Mourne" (Percy French), Mr. John Thompson ; recitation, "Ask Mamma" (A. Melville Bell), Mrs. Jack Rowland ; song, "The Flight of Ages" (F. E. Weatherly), Mrs. Slipper ; pianoforte solo (1) "On the Lake" (Edmonstone Duncan, Op. 53, No. 5) ; (2) "Study in A Minor" (Hermann Berens, Op. 61, No. 13), Miss Slipper ; song, "Come Back to Erin" (Claribel), Miss M. M'Combe ; song, "Annie of the Vale," Mr. John Thompson. Votes of thanks having been passed to the ladies who had presided at the tea-tables, to those who had contributed to the programme, and to the Chairman, a very pleasant evening was brought to a conclusion by the singing of the National Anthem and the pronouncing of the Benediction by the Chairman.

BAPTISM.

On Sunday, January 5th, 1913, at 25 Heatherbell Street, Belfast, by Rev. Alex. Osborne Ashworth, Senior Minister of York Street Church, Belfast, Isabella Montgomery, daughter of William and Eliza Jane Thompson.

DEATH.

ASHWORTH—On Friday, 10th January, 1913, at Waterloo, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire, Edwin (brother of the Rev. Alex. Osborne Ashworth, of Belfast), second son of the late Richard Ashworth, formerly of The Borders, Rossendale, Lancashire, aged 75. Interred at the Bethlehem Unitarian Chapel, Newchurch-in-Rossendale, Thursday, January 16th, 1913.

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